



Esprit de Corps

A bulletin of the Washington Service Corps

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Cispus AmeriCorps Team Empowers Students for the Impossible

Big white buses, rumbling up and down Highway 12. They are a familiar sight in East Lewis County. Linking the towns of Morton, Glenoma, Randle and Packwood, the buses of Mountain Highway Transit bring these otherwise isolated communities together.

Not only do they link the far flung towns of the valley, but the buses became a symbol of community unity for a civic engagement project developed by 25 Junior High School students.

In March, the Cispus AmeriCorps team invited youth from all over East Lewis County to attend the Roadmap to Civic Engagement Camp. The team, based out of the Cispus Learning Center, serves the Morton and White Pass school districts. Twenty five seventh- and eighth-graders attended camp.

Over the period of a weekend, the 10 AmeriCorps members covered the civic engagement curriculum up to the planning of a service project.

Identifying **hunger** as a community problem and identifying the food bank as a resource to address the problem,



Junior High students from White Pass and Morton School Districts line up in front of the transit bus they filled with donations for the local food bank. Empowered by their civic engagement camp experience the students collected 3,590 pounds of non-perishable food items in a single week.

the Junior High students set a goal of collecting enough food to fill one of the transit buses.

The idea certainly caught on and quickly galvanized the community. Students collected food at all the schools in the two school districts. They set up donation centers at each of the grocery stores in the valley. They capped the drive with a "Food for a Ticket" basketball game between the teachers of the Morton School District and White Pass School District.

It has not been recorded who won that basketball game, other than the clients of the food bank. But foremost among the winners are the 25 young people who set an impossible goal, then showed the community the impossible is not only do-able, but it can be fun as well!

Inside this issue:

CE is making a difference 2

Tonasket honors team 3

CERT training 4

Ready*Corps celebrates 4

Locke leans on WSC 5

Camping at school 6

MLK Day in Republic 7

Serving kids with cancer 7

Roadmap to Civic Engagement Encourages Involvement

A note from



Nancy Pringle,
WSC Director

As we move into Summer, many exciting things are happening with the Roadmap to Civic Engagement program. Members have gained experience working individually or together as a team in a variety of settings, honed their leadership skills, had intense discussions, and created meaningful service pro-

jects in their communities. On the issue of hunger alone, one team developed a handout with healthy recipes for the food bank to be included with bags of food for over 120 community residents while another repackaged 1,625 lbs. of dehydrated potatoes in 2.5 hours at the Lifeline Food Distribution Center. Other teams were moved to do something around holiday time, singing carols to seniors, playing Santa and providing cheer at a residential center for mentally and physically disabled adults, stuffing stockings for foster children, and participating in a 24-hour toy drive.

For those teams

that have begun the process of working with youth, many have found that the shortened curriculum is easier to work with but that the results are still powerful. Youth and members are making incredible contributions to their communities, and their success is evidenced by both the enthusiasm of the youth for their projects and the projects themselves, meeting real needs in local communities. These youth have worked on a variety of issues including hunger, care for orphaned animals, school uniforms for homeless youth, and toys for children with cancer. *(To read more about the food drive put*

on by youth from the Cispus camp and the Inter-generational Innovations/ Denny Middle School project to donate toys to children with cancer, please see articles in this issue.)

As you can see, this year has brought plenty of exciting and inspirational civic engagement action, and with several teams and some individual placement members still in the early stages or not yet begun, we have plenty still to look forward to! I thank all of you for the tremendous effort you put forth — you have truly brought this program to life and helped demonstrate to youth that they can make a difference in their communities.

Notes from a Cispus AmeriCorps Team Member:

Richard Cromwell shares his thoughts on the White Pass/Morton students civic engagement project.

This is what I felt during the project, and this is what I told the students at the celebration: *It never really mattered whether the project succeeded or not. It never did. What mattered was everyone working together on a project of their own design. What mattered was discovering skills*

and talents that they never knew they had. What really mattered the most, however, was that the students in the camp learned just what they were capable of. Never mind what they'd been told by parents and teachers. They had the power to make a difference in their community. Not only that, but they had fun while they were at it,

and they celebrated their efforts when they were through. As AmeriCorps members, we gave them the tools and then watched them succeed. There is no doubt in my mind that these kids will continue to succeed, even after our terms of service are up and newer teams take over.

That is what civic engagement means to me.

Chamber of Commerce Honors Tonasket Team

The Tonasket AmeriCorps program was recognized as the *Organization of the Year* by the Tonasket Chamber of Commerce. The Tonasket AmeriCorps Team was

chosen for this high achievement award because of their involvement in the community and their dedication to students in the Tonasket school district. Helen Casey, President of the Chamber of Commerce, stated "This is a well deserved award because of their valuable service to

members accepting the award. She stated "This is one of my finest moments of being an AmeriCorps member."

Randy Hauff, Tonasket Superintendent, stated in a letter to the members, "I congratulate you on the 2003 Organization of the Year award that you received from the Tonasket Chamber of Commerce.

The Chamber and the community recognize the outstanding contributions that you have made. You have been involved in the commu-



Secretary of Homeland Security, Tom Ridge, is welcomed to Seattle by AmeriCorps*VISTA Ready*Corps member Joan Maza.

Ridge Highlights Readiness at Forum

Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security, Tom Ridge arrived in Seattle on April 5, 2004. The former governor of Pennsylvania was greeted at Seattle's Boeing Field by Ready*Corps Homeland Security VISTA member **Joan Maza**. Maza is serving at the King County Department of Emergency Management. Secretary Ridge arrived in Seattle to take part in the last

of a series of Homeland Security Town Hall Conferences held throughout the nation. The event, which took place at Seattle University, was an opportunity to talk about current issues as they relate to Homeland Security and the state of our nation. Attended by over 250 people, the forum was sponsored by Council for Excellence in Government and Microsoft.



Back: Kim Crawford, Autumn Kennison, Wes Wirth, Nina Davis, Supervisor, Lara Hill, Admin. Asst., Shawna Fredericksen, & Joey Cohen. Front: Dolores Nelson & Kelly Johnson.

our community. We look forward to AmeriCorps members being in the community more." **Dolores Nelson**, first year member, was present on behalf of Tonasket AmeriCorps team

nity as well as for the work that you do for the children in the schools. Congratulations, and we wish you the best in continuing a strong program."

CERT Training Prepares Citizens for “The Big One”

It was a cool and windy day in Walla Walla. As the group arrived at the old house, screams could be heard from the inside of the building. They quickly divided up into groups and slowly entered the house. From the porch you could tell that this wasn't your run of the mill earthquake. Bod-

were many victims, most of whom were children. Some people did not survive the earthquake while others lost fingers or were impaled with objects. Everyone was noticeably shaken.

After taking a deep breath and assessing the situation, the team of nine went about their business.



CERT members plan their movements before they enter the scene of the disaster.

ies were strewn everywhere and helpless screams could be heard from the second story of the house.

There was no electricity and flashlights were the only source of light. There

Some team members went around to perform search and rescue and triage. Others set up an area where first aid would be performed and then attended to the wounded. Others helped to move the bodies of the victims. Everybody worked together to make sure that the greatest good was done for the greatest number of people.

Was this a real disaster? No, it was the final simulation of a Community Emergency Response Team (CERT) course sponsored by College Place Fire Department and the Walla Walla Department of Emergency Management. It was all under the watchful eye of **Gene Frazee**, a Ready*Corps VISTA member serving with Walla Walla Department of Emergency Management.

Over the course of three days, community members learned how to help themselves as well as their neighbors in case of a catastrophic disaster. During the 20+ hour course, CERT members learn some of the finer points of being a responder including disaster preparedness, light search and rescue, fire suppression, disaster medical operations, disaster psychology, terrorism, and how to organize a CERT team. By becoming a CERT member, these citizens have shown that they want to help themselves and

their neighbors if the unthinkable should happen. Because emergency services personnel will not be able to help everyone immediately following a major disaster, they can make a difference by using the skills learned in CERT.

Gene's CERT program is just one of 1,108 CERT programs across the country. There are CERT pro-



CERT volunteers assess probable injuries of "victim" during preparedness exercise.

grams all over the state of Washington. To see if there is a CERT program near you, please go to: <http://training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/CERT/dir.asp>.

Ready*Corps Reaches First Year Milestone

What started out a year ago as just a glimmer in the eye of several Washington Service Corps staff members has erupted into one of the largest AmeriCorps Homeland Security/Disaster Preparedness programs in the nation. Ready*Corps was created by the Washington Service Corps as part of the initiative to increase the

readiness of communities, especially low-income communities, to respond to disaster-related disruptions. Little did anyone know how much the Ready*Corps members would accomplish in one short year.

Last May, six Ready*Corps VISTA members began their year-long terms of ser-

vice in Regional Homeland Security offices all over Washington State. On the first birthday of the Ready*Corps program, there are 27 AmeriCorps VISTA members and 7 AmeriCorps USA members who serve in organizations ranging from rural fire districts to urban Red Cross chapters.

In the second year of the program, Ready*Corps will be enrolling up to 56 VISTA members along with 25 USA members for a total of 81 members serving in the state of Washington. The program is expanding to include a greater presence in school preparedness activities as well as a wider representation all across the state.

Governor Locke Celebrates Earth Day with WSC

Saltwater State Park between Seattle and Tacoma, was the scene of a unique Earth Day service project on April 23. The Governor of Washington, Gary Locke, participated along with six AmeriCorps teams from around the state on a project organized by Pat Porter, the AmeriCorps Supervisor for the King County Housing Authority (KCHA).

In the morning, members attended classes taught by State Parks rangers learning more about the park, including marine life, salmon habitat and life cycles, and effective park stewardship.

The second half of the day the teams split up and worked on three separate projects improving the park.

Governor Locke joined the members working on the stone work project and had many curious bystanders inspecting his handiwork.

AmeriCorps teams from KCHA, Federal Way Public Schools, Campus Connections, Intergenerational Innovations, the Hood Canal Watershed and Cispus Learning Cen-



Governor Gary Locke, while surrounded by AmeriCorps members, promotes conservation and volunteerism.

ter sent members and supervisors to serve for the day.

The project was also a chance for AmeriCorps teams to get to know each other. Christopher Maslanka, an AmeriCorps member with the Cispus Learning Center team, appreciated the change of scenery.

"It is great to get to a different area with a lot more people and a good chance to work with other AmeriCorps members," Maslanka said. He also enjoyed the opportunity to work on environmental projects in addition to the educational projects he works on every day. Kevin Wordelman, an AmeriCorps member with the

KCHA team, also enjoyed the chance to work on an environmental project.

"I feel very good about it because the work we are doing will not only benefit South King County, but the whole earth," Wordelman said.

At the end of the day, the participants had the opportunity to film a public service announcement (PSA) with the Governor. The PSA will promote the message of doing volunteer work. All the AmeriCorps members surrounded the Governor while he said his lines, then chimed in at the end with their (very short) line, "Volunteer!"

Lunch was provided to all members through the coordinated donations from Shari's Restaurant, Costco, and a special deal on pizza from Vince's Italian Restaurant and Pizzeria and the Washington Commission for National and Community Service (WCNCS).



Governor Locke works closely with AmeriCorps member Susan Schmitt in mortaring flagstone.

AmeriCorps & REI Team-up for Reading Adventures

The Northgate Reading Challenge run by the Northgate Elementary School's Washington Reading Corps AmeriCorps members brought Kindergarten through 5th Grade students together for fun, competition and reading.

The first challenge was for the school to read 2000 hours outside of class within the seven weeks. If they

were to make this goal, they would be able to take part in the Outdoor Adventure Safari sponsored by Recreation Equipment Incorporated (REI) cooperative. The second part of the challenge was to see which class could read the most during this time.

It was a fierce battle between the 3rd, 4th and 5th grade classes for reading the most.

In the end students from Mr. Van's fifth grade class were the victors.

All totaled, the children in the school read 3,050 hours during the seven-week period! With this

amazing drive, every child in the school got to go to the Outdoor Adventure Safari. Over two school days, each class worked with the staff from REI.

The children made S'mores.

climbed on the Traverse Wall.

Students learned about camping and conservation techniques with the experts from REI.

This challenge and contest drove the stu-



WILD ANIMALS! In the safety of your own school gym.



Real S'mores around a (fake) fire. Northgate students celebrate their reading adventures.

They read about wild animals.

They learned about Mt. Everest and

students to succeed, to learn, and to enjoy the beauty of literacy.

FAQ

AmeriCorps Alums can access information and print their own ed-award packet on-line.

Here's how:

1. Go to www.AmeriCorps.org
2. Click on Members & Alums
3. Click on Education Award
4. Click on Account Balance

On the first visit, you will have to answer a few questions to get an account number and PIN. The PIN is e-mailed to you immediately. After that you can use your account number and PIN to access ed-award information at any time.

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Frequently asked questions from the files of **Sandie Peterson**, the WSC AmeriCorps Administrative Professional:
 "I can't find my ed-award paperwork!"
 "How much do I have left in my AmeriCorps 'account?'"

King's Day of Service Celebrated by Families at "Kid Carnival"

The combined efforts of two AmeriCorps teams brought the message of "It's a day on, not a day off" to the rural communities of North Central Washington. Ferry County and Tonasket AmeriCorps

Carla writes: "I thought Martin Luther King Jr. Day was a great success. Everyone worked together to make the most of the day. With good food, good company, and fabulous entertainment; how could the day be anything but successful?"

teams started the day off with a get-to-know-you team building activity for members and volunteers. Their primary project for the day was a community food drive,

and a Kid Carnival at the Republic

school. Each child was encouraged to bring a can of food to take part in carnival. Seventy-seven children attended. From the carnival and community drive combined, 330 pounds of food were collected and donated to the local food bank.

During dinner the President's Proclamation declaring the third

Monday in January, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, a Federal Holiday

Deb writes: Our best foot was forward as a team and we were rewarded ten fold with the positive feedback from the people in the community.

was read. Dinner was followed by entertainment from various groups. The two AmeriCorps teams

and more than 25 volunteers joined in and sang *I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing*

Children and their parents were all involved, with many parents remarking on how much fun they had with their children.



A community sing highlights MLK Day activities in Republic.

Seattle Sixth Graders Make Most of Movie Night

At Intergenerational Innovations, the AmeriCorps team working with schools and community agencies in Seattle, recently completed the Roadmap to Civic Engagement program with an amazing group of 6th graders at Denny Middle School. The civic engagement group, otherwise known as EMERICA (**E**veryone **M**aking **E**verything **R**ight **I**n **C**ommunities **A**lways) committed to supporting cancer patients at Children's Hospital and Regional Medical Center. The

project focused on increasing public awareness about cancer patient support programs, such as *Locks of Love*, and the *Toy Wish List* program at Children's. Along with educating the community, the EMERICA team wanted to involve other students in the project. They hosted a toy drive at Denny Middle School for two weeks, culminating in a community movie night (in collaboration with the Denny Community Learning Center). The evening proved very success-

ful.

In addition to an abundance of new and used toys accumulated through the toy drive, they also raised money from the donations received from local grocery stores and McDonald's, selling concession snacks during the movie night. Furthermore, the students distributed brochures about the *Locks of Love* organization, and simply enjoyed the company of families and guests during the movie event. All of the proceeds went to the purchase of more

items on the Toy Wish List.

EMERICA celebrated the civic engagement program by delivering the new toys to Children's Hospital in Seattle. Overall, this experience verified the power of community building and togetherness. The intellectual and emotional development, coupled with compassion and love for others by the group of 6th graders, made for a very inspiring and rewarding experience.

Washington State Employment Security

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**Washington State
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Ready★corps

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SERVICE CORPS**

The WSC was created by the Washington State Legislature in 1983 to provide residents of the state of Washington with opportunities to serve their communities. The WSC assists private non-profit organizations and units of local government in addressing community needs and providing meaningful service experiences.

Since 1992, the WSC has been a key player in the national service movement that engages Americans of all ages and backgrounds in service that lights the darkness in communities across the nation. AmeriCorps members perform service that has direct and demonstrable impact in the areas of education, the environment, human services and public safety.

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LATE FLASH!!
Don't forget!

Central Washington University
has ten (count 'em, 10) tuition
waivers worth an additional
\$1,000 each for AmeriCorps
members who use their ed award
at CWU.
Contact Ellen Baeth at 509-963-
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